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Statement on the New York City and Washington, DC Terrorist Attacks

Yesterday, millions of American awakened to find the nation at war, attacked by barbarians who targeted innocent civilians. This senseless slaughter of human life was reprehensible, and must be denounced by all civilized peoples. For the moment, we can only share our grief and our condolences with those who lost family and friends. In our grief, we must remember our responsibilities. Congress has an obligation in this constitutional republic to preserve freedom and provide for national security. Sadly, our security measures were not adequate to prevent yesterday's tragedy. We must be willing to honestly examine our policies, and change those that weaken our national security. When we retaliate for this horror we have suffered, we must be certain that we punish only those who are guilty. There is an understandable sense of urgency in the nation, a sense that Congress should take action immediately. However, we must not kill innocent civilians in our rush to retaliate against those truly responsible. Times of tragedy and war naturally bring out strong emotions in all of us, but we must be careful to preserve personal liberty and privacy rights in the months ahead. Sometimes the people are only too anxious to sacrifice their liberties during a crisis, hoping to gain some measure of security. Yet nothing would please the terrorists more than if we willingly gave up some of our cherished liberties because of their actions. We can all pray for peace and ask for God's guidance during these troubling times. I know that our President, our congressional leaders, and all Americans possess the wisdom and compassion required to resolve this devastating crisis.